

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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*Memorandum*

TO : IEA - Mr. Crane

DATE: May 22, 1972

FROM : IBS - Kenneth R. Giddens *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: Use of VOA Transmitters for "Grey" Broadcasts

The use of any established VOA facility for the broadcasting of "grey" programs (i.e. programs not attributed to VOA or the U.S. Government) would compromise VOA's position as the official radio voice of the United States. Disclosure, which would be unavoidable, would open us to the charge, at home and abroad that the VOA was put temporarily to a covert, "cold war" use.

The use of frequencies other than those on which VOA normally operates, which has been suggested as a means of disassociating the VOA from this "covert" use of its transmitters, would not serve to ensure against disclosure. To begin with, there would be no way to keep such information from the non-U.S. employees at the relay base or bases in question; it would be bound to leak out. Secondly, Soviet and/or PRC technology is fully capable of calibrating the point of origin of a radio broadcast, and "fixing" it as coming from our antennas. The propaganda arms of those countries would seize the opportunity to spread the word, world wide, that the VOA was, after all, a thinly disguised "cold war" asset, as some of our Congressional critics have implied. The damage to VOA both among our audiences and at home would be difficult to repair.

Another serious problem lies in the relationship between VOA and the host government. Today, all VOA operations and dealings are open and public, as befits a government-to-government relationship. Altering those operations and dealings might prejudice our relations with a host government for years to come.

We are, in principle, in favor of a tactical "grey" radio operation to be mounted during these tenuous months ahead. But it should be conducted over "emergency" transmitters, a contingency requirement other U.S. agencies may be prepared to meet.

State Dept. review completed

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